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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY China

REPORT

SUBJECT The Impact of Communism on the Chinese Masses

DATE DISTR. 10 March 1961

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"The Impact

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1.

[redacted] the basic differences between the Eastern and western concept of "masses" had to be kept in mind. These differences were not merely racial, nor based on the relatively low ratio of Chinese intellectuals to the illiterate millions. [redacted] the answer was in the specific historical background of Chinese society and its fundamentally different nature. The total number of intellectuals who had completed their higher education before the Communist take-over in China did not exceed one fourth of one percent of the population of the country. This number included both those who had received their schooling in the country and those who were trained in foreign countries. Assuming that the total population was over 600 million, the number of educated Chinese approximated 1,500,000.

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2.

[redacted] the former landlords in this number not because of their intellectual accomplishment, but rather because of their ability to retain and to operate their farmlands for so many centuries with the aid of their families. [redacted] over 500,000 members of the landlord class lost their lives during the last land reform period because they were charged by the Communists with being corrupt criminals. Closely associated with the Chinese landlords were the extremely large families, embracing even very distant relatives, which facilitated the preservation of the landlord's title to his land in times of trouble and aided its cultivation in peacetime. Even though only limited numbers of relatives were actually intimate members of the landowner's family, great numbers of persons were permitted to claim various degrees of kinship. Sometime there were several hundred such kinsmen, all of whom effectively served the landlord's purpose because they were invariably devoted and reliable workers or foremen on the family land. Up to the time of the Communist take-over, these relatives derived certain personal advantages as members of an important or powerful family.

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3.

The picture changed radically following the land reform when many of the landlords were executed and their large families disintegrated. Irrespective of the importance of the Chinese landlord families in the past, their remnants were absorbed within the mass of Chinese agricultural workers. Even though traditional landowner families had disappeared in current China, the small closely-knit family unit continued to exist. The small units were formed on tradition and were characterized by mutual love of all their members.

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4.

[redacted] the Chinese masses, representing 99.75 percent of the entire population, were of stronger moral fiber [redacted]

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[redacted] The Chinese masses, [redacted] were alleged to possess a feeling of togetherness, particularly when pressure was applied from above. Furthermore, each Chinese indulged in constant evaluation of his own character; he was willing to gamble with his future only when he felt that he could improve his living conditions through acts which did not require a sustained effort. [redacted]

[redacted] the average Chinese was highly individualistic, very honest, and peace-loving, and had a great deal of common sense.

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5.

[redacted] Chinese society had been subjected to violent political and economic changes, [redacted] some of the more important developments

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since the Communist take-over in 1948⁹. When gaining political control, the Communists subjected the country to one reorganization after another for almost five years. The situation during this period was chaotic. Each of the various stages of Communist reorganization usually was directed against a specific target.

- a. The campaign against corrupt government employees was known as the "Movement of the Three Evils."
 - b. The so-called "Movement of Five Evils" was directed against former corrupt businessmen who were known to have been involved in unscrupulous exploitation of the population.
 - c. The "tiger beating" which followed the previous two movements gave every Chinese citizen an opportunity publicly to accuse any officeholder or any other individual in his community, and the accused could also defend himself in public against his accuser.
 - d. There were three other movements before the "Let all flowers blossom and let all schools of thoughts compete" was introduced by MAO Tse-tung in June 1956. This era of relative political relaxation, which lasted only eight months, permitted criticism of the Communist system by the Chinese intellectual.
 - e. The situation changed suddenly [redacted] when the government initiated a merciless struggle against right-wing bourgeois elements in China. [redacted] Hungarian events [redacted] inspired this movement, which was directed against the right-wing intellectuals. 50X1-HUM
 - f. [redacted] there were three additional clearly-defined Communist campaigns following the anti-bourgeoisie movement: the so-called "Anti-Supervisors Movement," which was actually intended to do away with all non-Communist supervisors in nationalized institutions; the "Ten-Year Hardship Movement"; and the subsequent "Iron Melting" campaign [redacted] with which the ten-year campaign was eventually combined. 50X1-HUM
6. In reality all these "movements" were started to give the Communists an excuse for compulsory introduction of an extra four hours' daily work for all government office employees and compulsory Sunday work for all other workers. The Communist pressure reached its peak [redacted] 50X1-HUM
 7. The impact of anti-American propaganda on the Chinese masses was a complete failure. The average Chinese actually hated the Communists more than he hated the Americans or, for that matter, other foreigners. In the past, some Chinese actually suffered as a result of activities of the "whites" in China, so a certain amount of antiwhite feeling could be justified. [redacted] the number of those who were wronged was so small that their influence upon the present Chinese masses was negligible. Quite naturally, the Chinese Communist regime focused all its propaganda activity on this small number of individuals in order to create the impression that all Chinese had been wronged, and all hated the "imperialists." Since the Communists could not point to a single specific offense committed by "American imperialism" against China, they exerted every effort in their propaganda to discredit "the Americans" through association with the other "imperialists." 50X1-HUM
 8. Since the Chinese masses had no access to any impartial or neutral sources of information, they were completely exposed to the pressures and distortions of

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the Communist propaganda machine. [redacted] the intellectuals were able to read some foreign press summaries, including U.S. and other anti-Chinese press reports, which dealt with prevailing conditions in China. Such items were quoted without any comment, since they were intended to serve a definite political purpose. [redacted] 50X1-HUM

[redacted] these summaries were used in political education of youth. The political instructors expected all those who were able to read the critical articles to defend the Communist Chinese road to socialism and to prove that the statements made in the foreign press comments were untrue. Because the summaries were made available only to highly-educated individuals [redacted] 50X1-HUM the Communists used this means of getting the intellectuals accustomed to making public statements which were contrary to their actual beliefs. [redacted] if this was continued over an extended period, eventually even highly-educated persons in China would be so confused that, in spite of any reluctance towards cooperation with the Communists, they would be turned into pawns which could be used to further the aims of Communist propaganda. 50X1-HUM

9. As to the effectiveness of Communist methods in winning the support of the Chinese masses [redacted] 50X1-HUM a differentiation must be made between forced cooperation with the Communists and free and independent individual support for the Communist cause. The average worker in China might be compared with a man chained to an oar of a galley and not fed if he failed to pull his oar. Judged only on the basis that the Communists had succeeded in fully chaining everybody in China to the oars, the regime had met with success. In this respect Chinese Communist organizing talent was admirable.
10. Naturally the quality of work performed was low, but the quantity could not be overlooked. Whereas the manual laborer in the West worked eight hours, his Chinese counterpart worked 12 hours daily in order to compensate for the lack of mechanization. Soviet and other satellite specialists were exerting every effort to train large numbers of indigenous workers, but they found the process both tedious and slow. [redacted] 50X1-HUM the skilled workers and foremen could be compared to an accomplished chauffeur who could drive but who knew nothing about the automobile engine. In China today numerous newly-assembled power plants, steel mills, spinning mills and flour mills were supervised by one expert, who ran them with the help of semi-skilled, or semi-trained personnel. The fact that such a deficiency existed at present was no indication that China would not be able eventually to educate an adequate number of reliable scientists and technicians with outside assistance.
11. Of the various foreign experts who were employed in training local technicians, the Soviets were looked upon with most favor because they were humble and ever willing to help, and their simple work methods appealed to the unskilled Chinese workers. Even the most elementary technical operations had to be demonstrated to the Chinese technical trainee step by step. On the other hand, [redacted] 50X1-HUM the East German technicians were unpopular because they presumed they were dealing with skilled workers. In their demonstrations of various working methods they took for granted that the Chinese trainees possessed a certain rudimentary knowledge of the subject. 50X1-HUM
12. An entirely different attitude prevailed insofar as Chinese engineers were concerned. Most of these, particularly the older generation, were educated in the West [redacted] but not in the USSR. To these experts, the Soviet engineer's primitive approach to technical problems was usually unacceptable. On the other hand, the attitude of the lower-level Chinese Communist official towards the Soviets was cool but polite. [redacted] 50X1-HUM the Chinese took advantage of the Soviet willingness to show their primitive know-how, whereas the East Germans were rather reluctant to disclose too much of their more advanced technical knowledge to the Chinese.

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13. Although the number of technically trained individuals in China was not great, the average worker continued to differentiate between the older generation of technicians and engineers who were educated before the advent of Communism and the new technical experts who received their training after the Communist take-over. Whereas the older generation of so-called "intellectual technical experts," even though politically unimportant, was tolerated by the regime only because its members had specialized knowledge, the Chinese workers looked up to these experts because they remained the symbol of the Chinese past and because practically all of them showed no enthusiasm for the new order. On the other hand, the average worker detested the newly-trained younger Chinese technicians who were trusted by the regime.
14. [redacted] CHOU En-lai exhibited a great deal of understanding for the Chinese intellectuals. The real reason behind CHOU's subsequent change of attitude toward them was unknown. [redacted] 50X1-HUM
[redacted] it might have grown out of the bad impression CHOU formed during the "One Hundred Flowers Movement." [redacted] even though MAO Tse-tung was very popular among the Communists, he could never equal the pseudo-deification achieved by Stalin.
15. The average Chinese was a superstitious person, but he was not inclined to believe in any concept compared to the Christian attitude towards God. To the Chinese worker, a god had to be useful and tangible, since he was inclined to accept nothing which lay outside his world or within the sphere of heaven. The average Chinese, however, did have a fear of the unknown. Being devoid of any special religious feelings, the worker had very little tenderness, but was capable of being sentimental for a limited time. In addition, the Chinese was not inclined to believe in personal sacrifice unless he could expect an appropriate reward. Even though he conformed temporarily to pressure, he continued to look for an excuse to evade the demands that were forced upon him. [redacted] doubted that any amount of effort on the part of the present Communist regime could either change or even influence the character of the Chinese people. 50X1-HUM
16. In the recent past, the Chinese masses appeared to exhibit most hatred for the Japanese. On the other hand, they harbored neither special hatred nor particular admiration for the "whites." At present, the average Chinese individual was inclined to believe that "whites" were rich and through politeness to them Chinese might gain certain personal advantages. The great mass of Chinese had never had any direct association or contact with "white people." Practically none of the members of the lower class were capable of differentiating between the various nationalities; to the average Chinese, a Soviet was as much a "white" as an American. [redacted] the so-called "hate America" campaign was artificially inspired by the present regime, which incited the crowds at public rallies against the unknown phantom labelled "American imperialism." 50X1-HUM
17. [redacted] the religious situation there. Most of the Chinese Communist regime oppression continued to be directed at the Taoists because of their previous collaboration with Japan, participation in public graft, and extortion of money from their followers. Buddhism and Islam were regarded as imposed by the imperialists for the sole purpose of exploiting the Chinese people. The average Chinese convert was free to practice Christianity only as long as he dissociated himself from "foreign agents," i.e. missionaries. Similarly, Roman Catholics were permitted to enjoy religious "freedom" as long as they complied with the government's demand to separate themselves from the Pope. Naturally the Communists saw to it that the younger generation was educated along strict anti-religious lines. All churches, which had had a record of collaborating with Japan or associating with the activities of warlords, continued to be main targets of the Communist anti-religious propaganda. 50X1-HUM

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